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ABSTRACT

Many studies of attitudes toward feminism have investigated differences between the sexes or have examined a specific issue across time. To investigate attitude changes toward a variety of feminist issues over a 10-year period, a replication study was designed for college students in a midwestern university. A questionnaire measuring attitudes toward feminist issues in 5 areas was distributed to 301 students in 1970 and 455 students in 1980. In addition to abortion, the questionnaire addressed such issues as equal job and educational opportunities, sex-role stereotypes, shared parental role responsibilities, suitability of child care outside the home, and a total score measuring general profeminist attitudes as identified by a women's liberation group in 1970. Results indicated a marked change from 1970 to 1980 in the profeminist direction for both men and women in all issue areas except on the issue of abortion, which shifted in the opposite direction. (The survey questionnaire is included in the document.) (Author/NRB)

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Changes in the Feminist Perspective: From 1970 - 1980

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INTRODUCTION

As early as 1934 Kirkpatrick looked at a number of issues related to feminism and developed a belief-pattern scale which he used in comparing differences between generations. His findings suggested any differences in attitudes were more general than specific. Furthermore, there was greater disagreement between the sexes of the younger generation than the parental generation. Kirkpatrick showed that a pro-feminist attitude was positively correlated with the amount of education. Therefore the differences between the generations might be explained in terms of educational differences. Following this initial investigation by Kirkpatrick, little was done until the 1970's. In 1974, Roper and LaBeff replicated Kirkpatrick's study and found the same trends. For both sexes and generations, the scores measured in 1974 in Texas were higher than the scores for sex and generation in 1934 in Minnesota. Thus, the results of these two studies are consistent with the following hypotheses:

(1) Profeminist attitudes are increasing for both men and women.

(2) Women are more profeminist than men.

(3) Women's attitudes are probably changing more rapidly than men's.

With these noted exceptions, most studies related to attitudes towards feminism have investigated differences between the sexes, or examined a specific issue, such as abortion across time. Our study is unique, since it investigates how a variety of feminist issues may have changed over a ten year period in a specific population, namely college students enrolled at a Midwestern State University.

The orginal survey was conducted in 1970, as a class project in the Survey Methods course taught by Professor McDiarmid. The purpose of replicating the study in 1980 was to investigate how MSU students had changed over a 10 year period.

METHOD

In the 1980 survey the principle methodological objective was to follow as exactly as possible the procedure that had been used in the original survey. To have introduced any changes in the method or procedure even if they were clearly

improvements would have confounded the methodological change with the temporal variable. Thus, the exact sampling procedure which was random selection of classes rather than individuals was carefully replicated in 1980 using the identical survey instrument.

To develop the scale (See Table 1) the students asked the members of the Women's Liberation Group active on campus in 1970 to list the issues they felt reflected their concerns within the feminist movement. The class then discussed these issues informally and developed a large pool of items each addressing a single, specific issue. The categories (See Table 2) were established a priori by the class members during this initial item-development process. The large pool of items was taken back to the Women's Liberation Group for endorsement. Those items in each category which received high or low endorsement ratings by the majority of the Women's Liberation Group members were selected to be included in the Survey on Social Attitudes.

The data in the 1970 survey was collected by the students in the Survey class. Data for the 1980 survey was collected by two students recruited for independent study credit in psychology or women's studies. Using figures obtained from Institutional Research, a "quota" of students was established for each of 13 categories. These categories were lower and upper division classes within each of 6 colleges: Arts and Humanities; Business; Education; Health and Physical Education; Natural Science, Math and Home Economics; and Social and Behavioral Sciences, plus upper division courses in Nursing. These "quotas" were calculated so that the final sample of at least 300 students would be representative of these thirteen categories. Using the MSU 1980 Spring Quarter Class Schedule, at least one class within each of these 14 categories was randomly selected for distribution of the "Social Attitude Survey". If necessary, additional classes were randomly selected until the quota was exceeded. Fourteen classes were so sampled in 1970 and twenty-two in 1980. The two student surveyors arranged with the instructors to meet the designated classes. The 14 sampling categories were randomly assigned to the two surveyors with the restriction

that each should sample a category in each college.

RESULTS

The factor analysis of the combined 1970 and 1980 samples (See Table 3) included both Fem-Scale items and demographic variables shows that the factor structure reflected the a priori item categories. We found a general feminism factor (FACTOR 1) and three additional minor factors tapping the fair employment, parental role and child care areas. (Refer to Table 2). All the feminism items except items #6 (Wages and Salaries) and #12 (Abortion) loaded .2 or more on the general feminism factor. All the stereotypic items loaded more than .6. Of the 15 other variables, only 5 loaded more than ±.2 on any of the feminism factors. These were:

(1) Family size which loaded - .33 on the Proabortion Factor.

(2) Being male which loaded - .43 on the General Fem Factor.

(3) Being raised on a farm which loaded - .23 on the Proabortion Factor.

(4) Metro which loaded - .21 on the Proabortion Factor., and

(5) Year which loaded - .34 on Proabortion and - .5 on General Fem Factor.

In order to see if this factor structure prevailed in both 1970 and 1980, the factor analysis was repeated separately for the 1970 and 1980 samples. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 4.

By and large the factor structure was very similar for the two years. There did however, appear to be greater communality of the feminist issues in 1980, since the loadings of the feminist scale items on the general feminism factor tended to be higher. This is especially true for the abortion item which loads approximately equally on the General Feminism Factor and a Metro vs. Farm factor.

The abortion item also loads higher on the fair employment factor. On the basis of these factor analyses, we decided to proceed with our a priori plan which was to analyze the data using the item categories in Table 2 as dependent variables.

A series of analysis of covariance using year, sex, religion, and college sampled as independent variables and the previously mentioned dependent variables was conducted.

The Farm and Metro variables were used as covariates in all of these analyses because the factor analysis had indicated a small relationship between these variables and the feminism factors. Other covariates were used to increase dependent variable specificity. (See Table 5).

The major results of these analyses for the change from 1970 to 1980, which are shown in Table 6, were as follows:

(1) There was a highly significant change in PROFEM in the profeminist direction for both men and women.

(2) In the analyses of the four dependent measures; FAIR, STEREO, CARE and ROLE, each was examined with the other three partially out. The changes in FAIR and ROLE were small or nonexistent whereas there were relatively large changes in STEREO and CARE.

(3) The abortion item, which was examined with PROFEM, ROLE and FAIR partialled out, showed a major shift in the antifeminism direction.

The results of the Male-Female comparison, which are shown in Table 7, were as follows:

(1) As would be expected, Females scored significantly above males on PROFEM.

(2) Similar effects were found for the specific issues of FAIR, STEREO and CARE, but not for ROLE or ABORTION. There were no sex differences with repect to role. The situation with respect to Abortion was more complex. Although both sexes were more proabortion in 1970 than 1980, the change over the 10 year period was considerably greater for the men than for the women. Men were more proabortion than women in 1970, but slightly less proabortion than women in 1980. This interaction was significant at the - .01 level.

Minor significant effects were obtained for the Farm and Metro covariates (Items 23 & 24). Minor significant main effects were also obtained for Religion (Item 22) and the College from which the sample was obtained. Classes within colleges did not have a significant effect. There were also several significant interactions

of small magnitude, however these did not compromize the major results described previously.

DISCUSSION

Our study extends what Kirkpatrick and Roper found: a general continuation of a pro feminism trend over the past several decades. By and large MSU students have become more feminist, but the gains are apparently greater in some areas than in others.

The relative magnitude of the differences between males and females on issued of male-female stereotypes, fair employment, child care outside the home and parental roles (Refer to Table 2) which were observed in our study correlate almost exactly with the relative magnitude observed by Osmond and Martin in 1975.

However, the attitude towards abortion has moved almost twice as far in the anti feminism direction than the other items which have, on the average, moved in the pro feminism direction. This suggests that the change toward more liberal views regarding abortion reported by Vincent and Barton in 1973 for college women may have been followed by a shift back to more traditional views. In fact, Ebauch and Henry (1980) reported such a shift towards more conservative views on abortion beginning as early as 1975, thus supporting our findings.

Paradoxically at the same time this has occurred, the correlation between belief in other feminist issues and belief in the abortion issue has increased. Thus in 1970 abortion was less related to the general feminism factor ($r = .05$) than in 1980 ($r = .28$). This suggests that men changed more on the abortion issue than did women because the women were more anchored to the feminist movement and therefore more resistant to change than the men, for whom the abortion issue may be independent of other feminist concerns. Similarly, the susceptability to Pro Life Propoganda of men, and others with little identification with feminism to Pro Life Propoganda may be greater. This could account for the increased correlation between the abortion issue and general feminism in 1980.

It is important to keep in mind that the Scale was developed on the premise that feminist ideology forms a unified whole. To a certain extent that is true since we did obtain a general feminism factor. However, because the loadings on the general factor are low and there are four feminism factors, not only one, it appears that the ideal of a unitary feminist ideology, although somewhat truer in 1980 than in 1970, has still not been realized among students at Mankato State University.

The implications of attitudes as measured for actual behavior are uncertain. For example, although there is a large number of people in the sample who only endorse abortion to save the mother's life, it is also true that a substantial proportion of pregnant women at Mankato State University do obtain abortions.

The relevance of these findings to AWP objectives are twofold. As feminists, it is important that we become aware not only of positive changes in attitudes towards women, but also of negative changes with respect to other issues. As researchers, an important goal should be to develop techniques which investigate more carefully and accurately those actions which will bring about positive change on specific issues such as abortion. We should bear in mind that with regard to the feminism movement, it may be a better strategy to promote specific issues (e.g., fair employment, equal pay) in attempting to gain support rather than to promote a comprehensive platform of "feminist ideology" with planks that are unacceptable to certain groups.

Table 1

A SURVEY OF SOCIAL ATTITUDES AND PERSONAL BACKGROUND

We are surveying the relationship between the attitudes students hold and certain aspects of their personal background. Please answer each question by circling the appropriate number at the right. If by chance you have already filled out this questionnaire in another class, please complete the first question and leave the rest blank. Otherwise, please be sure to answer every question. If you are not sure of an answer, but can make a reasonable guess, please put that down. Thank you for your help.

		Yes	No
1.	Have you previously completed this questionnaire?	2	1

In question 2 through 16, circle 5 if you strongly agree with the statement, circle 4 if you agree with it, circle 3 if you are undecided, circle 2 if you disagree with it, and circle 1 if you strongly disagree with it.

		SA	A	U	D	SD
2.	Vocational school classes should be co-educational and not segregated by sex.	5	4	3	2	1
3.	The primary responsibility for the care of a child belongs equally to both parents.	5	4	3	2	1
4.	The dominant nature of man makes him more fit than his wife to lead the household.	5	4	3	2	1
5.	There are fewer women executives because women, by their very nature, are less able to make decisions.	5	4	3	2	1
6.	Wages and salaries should be based exclusively on job description.	5	4	3	2	1
7.	Children of working mothers necessarily suffer from neglect.	5	4	3	2	1
8.	Male prejudice prevents women of high ability from attaining important executive positions.	5	4	3	2	1
9.	A woman's place is in the home.	5	4	3	2	1
10.	It is detrimental for a woman to pursue a career in a masculine occupation; eg. auto-mechanics, because it makes her feel less feminine.	5	4	3	2	1
11.	By nature, women aren't as logical as men and can't handle abstract ideas as well.	5	4	3	2	1
12.	An abortion is only justified to save the mother's life.	5	4	3	2	1
13.	The responsibility for directing the rearing of the children should be shared equally by both parents.	5	4	3	2	1
14.	If given equivalent training, the performance of women would equal that of men on most tasks.	5	4	3	2	1
15.	Day Care centers and nursery schools can provide for a child's development just as well as its mother.	5	4	3	2	1
16.	Women are unjustly discriminated against with respect to educational and employment opportunities.	5	4	3	2	1
17.	Your Sex: 1 = Female 2 = Male				2	1
18.	Number of sisters in your family: 0 7 6	5	4	3	2	1
19.	Number of brothers in your family: 0 7 6	5	4	3	2	1
	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 = more than 6					
20.	Your classification: 1 - Freshman, 2 - Sophomore, 3 = Junior, 4 = Senior, 5 = Post Graduate, 6 = Other 6	5	4	3	2	1
21.	Your marital status: 1 = Married, 2 = Single, 3 = Divorced, 4 = Separated, 5 = Widowed	5	4	3	2	1
22.	Your religion: 1 = Roman Catholic, 2 = Protestant, 3 = Jewish, 4 = Other		4	3	2	1

23. Were you raised on a farm? 1 = Yes 2 = No 2 1

24. Did you attend high school within 20 miles of a city with a population of 100,000 or more? 1 = Yes 2 = No 2 1

25. If your father were asked to use one of these 5 names to describe his social class, which one would he choose? 1 = Lower, 2 = Working, 3 = Lower Middle, 4 = Middle, 5 = Upper Middle, 6 = Upper 6 5 4 3 2 1

26. What is your parents' family income? 1 = Under $5,000, 2 = 5,000 - 10,000, 3 = 10,000 - 20,000, 4 = 20,000 - 30,000, 5 = 30,000 - 40,000, 6 = 40,000 - 50,000, 7 = Over 50,000 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

27. Highest level of education completed by your father: 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

28. Highest level of education completed by your mother: 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

1 = Some grade school, 2 = Completed grade school, 3 = Some high school, 4 = Completed high school, 5 = Completed high school and also had other training, but not college, e.g., technical, 6 = Some college, 7 = Completed college, 8 = Some graduate work, 9 = Graduate degree, M.D., M.A., Ph.D., etc.

29. My major is in the college of 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

1 - Humanities (Art, English, Foreign Languages, History, Mass Communications, Music, Philosophy, Speech Communication, Theater)
2 = Business (Accounting, Computer Science, Economics, Industrial and Technical Studies)
3 = Education (Counseling and Student Personnel, Ed. Admin. and Foundations, Experimental Education and Studies, Instructional Media and Technology, Rehab. Counseling, Special Ed.)
4 = Health and Physical Education (Dental Assisting and Hygiene, Health Science, Physical Education, Recreation and Park Administration, Speech Pathology)
5 = Natural Science, Math and Home Economics (Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Electronical Engineering Technology, Geology, Home Economics, Medical Technology, Physics, Statistic)
6 = Social and Behavioral Sciences (Geography, Law Enforcement, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work, Urban and Regional Studies)
7 = Nursing and Preprofessional (Nursing, Pre Med, Pre Law)
8 = Undecided

Table 2: Survey Item A Priori Categories

Category Name	Category Description	Items from Survey
FAIR	Equal job and education opportunity	2. Vocational school classes should be co-educational and not segregated by sex.
		6. Wages and salaries should be based exclusively on job description.
		8. Male prejudice prevents women of high ability from attaining important executive positions.
		14. If given equivalent training, the performance of women would be equal that of men on most tasks.
		16. Women are unjustly discriminated against with respect to educational and employment opportunities.
STEREO	Sex role stereotypes	4. The dominant nature of man makes him more fit than his wife to lead the household.
		5. There are fewer women executives because women, by their very nature, are less able to make decisions.
		9. A woman's place is in the home.
		10. It is detrimental for a woman to pursue a career in a masculine occupation; eg. auto-mechanics, because it makes her feel less feminine.
		11. By nature, women aren't as logical as men and can't handle abstract ideas as well.
ABORTION	Grounds for abortion	12. An abortion is only justified to save the mother's life.
ROLE	Shared parental role responsibilities	3. The primary responsibility for the care of a child belongs equally to both parents.
		13. The responsibility for directing the rearing of the children should be shared equally by both parents.
CARE	Suitability of child care outside home	7. Children of working mothers necessarily suffer from neglect.
		15. Day Care centers and nursery schools can provide for a child's development just as well as its mother.
PROFEM	General Profeminist attitudes	All of the above items excluding, the abortion item (12).

Table 3: Factor Analysis of Fem-Scale
(Combined 1970 and 1980 samples N = 705)

Variables	Fem Factors[a]				Communalities		
	I	VI	VII	X	Fem 4	Other 6	All 10
Demographic Variables							
Famsize	.02	.00	-.06	-.33	.11	.15	.26
Catholic[b]	.03	.00	.06	-.10	.01	.73	.74
Protestant[b]	-.09	-.05	-.04	.00	.01	.76	.77
Male[b]	-.43	-.17	-.06	.09	.23	.04	.27
Farm[b]	.00	-.01	-.03	-.23	.05	.17	.22
Metro[b]	.02	.09	-.04	.21	.05	.08	.13
SES	.02	-.02	.11	.01	.01	.45	.46
Income	.01	.00	.04	.02	.00	.34	.34
Father Education	.02	-.02	-.03	-.07	.01	.53	.54
Mother Education	.02	.02	-.04	-.07	.01	.27	.28
College From Which Students Sampled							
Humanities[b]	.03	-.07	-.02	-.04	.01	.99	.99
Business[b]	-.06	-.03	.03	.06	.01	.81	.82
Social-Behavioral[b]	-.06	.10	-.01	.11	.03	.96	.99
Education[b]	-.04	-.01	.00	-.07	.01	.51	.52
Natural Sciences[b]	.02	.00	-.07	-.04	.01	.53	.54
Fem-Scale Items							
Fair(2)[c]	.38	.07	.22	.01	.20	.01	.21
Fair(6)[c]	.12	.24	.18	-.18	.14	.01	.15
Fair(8)[c]	.27	.62	.08	.07	.47	.01	.48
Fair(14)[c]	.41	.24	.25	.04	.30	.00	.30
Fair(16)[c]	.32	.66	.04	.14	.56	.01	.57
Role(3)[c]	.26	.04	.65	-.06	.50	.01	.51
Role(13)[c]	.20	.07	.67	-.03	.49	.01	.50
Care(7R)[c]	.48	.10	.00	.03	.24	.01	.25
Care(15)[c]	.34	.27	-.06	-.09	.20	.03	.23
Stereo(4R)[d]	.70	.18	.06	.07	.53	.01	.54
Stereo(5R)[d]	.62	.03	.13	.05	.40	.03	.43
Stereo(9R)[d]	.69	.14	.09	-.03	.50	.02	.52
Stereo(10R)[d]	.68	.02	.04	-.03	.47	.00	.47
Stereo(11R)[d]	.65	.03	.16	.09	.46	.01	.47
Abortion(12R)[d]	.09	.05	-.07	.40	.18	.04	.22
Time Period							
Year(1980)[b]	.50	.06	.09	-.34	.38	.20	.58

Note. Varimax rotation of principle axes factor analysis showing confirmation of a priori Fem-Scale subscales, and communalities for the Fem-Scale and demographic items on the four Fem-Scale factors, the other six factors, and all ten factors. Ten factors were selected on the basis of Kaiser's criterion and accounted for 60% of the variance.

[a]The factors are: I Profem, VI Fair, VII, Role and X Proabortion.

[b]Variable name indicates the "1" end of 0-1 variable.

[c]Number in parentheses is item number from Fem Scales (See Table 1).

[d]The "R" indicates a reflected item.

Table 4: Factor Structure of Feminist Issues in 1970 as Compared with 1980. (Factors loading on the Fem-Scale items abstracted from Varimax Rotations of the first 10 Principle Axes).

Variables	1970 Fem Factors (N=285) I	IV	V	IX	Femb^2	1980 Fem Factors (N=422) I	IV	V	IX	Femb^2
Demographic Variables										
Famsize	-.01	-.01	-.05	-.26	.070	-.10	-.02	-.06	-.22	.062
Catholic	.03	-.02	.09	-.07	.014	.04	-.01	.04	-.03	.004
Protestant	-.06	.00	.00	-.03	.004	-.03	-.05	-.07	-.21	.052
Male	-.34	-.06	-.11	.20	.171	-.44	-.28	-.01	.07	.277
Farm	.04	-.03	-.03	-.45	.206	.04	.02	.00	-.50	.252
Metro	.05	.05	-.06	.11	.021	.03	.10	-.03	.41	.180
SES	.03	-.15	.26	.05	.094	-.01	.05	-.03	.16	.029
Income	-.07	-.10	.06	-.02	.019	.05	.03	.01	.15	.026
Father Educ.	-.14	.00	-.08	.11	.038	-.03	-.04	.02	.22	.051
Mother Educ.	-.06	.11	-.08	.00	.022	.02	-.01	.01	.09	.009
College From Which Students Sampled										
Humanities	.19	-.10	.04	-.01	.048	-.10	-.07	-.04	-.02	.017
Business	-.26	-.05	-.12	.10	.094	-.08	-.12	.09	-.05	.031
Social-Behav.	-.01	.09	.05	-.01	.011	.26	.33	-.06	.11	.192
Education	-.03	-.01	.02	-.08	.008	.04	-.02	.03	.04	.004
Natural Science	.08	.13	-.04	.01	.025	-.13	-.13	-.10	-.06	.047
Fem-Scale Items										
Fair(2)	.31	.01	.13	-.08	.119	.34	.11	.27	-.01	.201
Fair(6)	-.05	.14	.23	-.10	.085	-.01	.27	.16	.00	.099
Fair(8)	.15	.58	.00	-.02	.359	.27	.66	.17	.10	.547
Fair(14)	.32	.44	.23	.04	.350	.35	.18	.28	.05	.236
Fair(16)	.23	.66	.09	.12	.511	.33	.64	.03	.06	.523
Role(3)	.12	-.03	.66	-.11	.463	.32	.07	.69	.00	.583
Role(13)	.00	.04	.65	.13	.441	.25	.08	.65	-.04	.493
Care(7R)	.39	.10	-.05	.14	.184	.44	.21	.01	-.13	.255
Care(15)	.10	.33	-.12	-.24	.191	.29	.29	-.06	.00	.172
Stereo(4R)	.62	.19	-.07	-.04	.427	.65	.23	.14	.07	.500
Stereo(5R)	.56	.10	.08	.03	.331	.59	.02	.16	.13	.391
Stereo(9R)	.56	.23	-.04	-.04	.370	.60	.13	.19	.04	.415
Stereo(10R)	.47	.06	-.06	-.16	.254	.75	-.01	.08	-.06	.592
Stereo(11R)	.55	.01	.16	.22	.377	.69	.06	.14	.03	.500
Abortion(12R)	.05	-.01	-.10	.42	.189	.28	.14	-.07	.21	.147

Table 5: Covariates Employed in the Analyses of Covariance.

Analysis	Covariates Employed
Profem	Farm, Metro
Stereo	Farm, Metro, Care, Fair, Role
Care	Farm, Metro, Stereo, Fair, Role
Fair	Farm, Metro, Stereo, Care, Role
Role	Farm, Metro, Stereo, Care, Fair
Proabortion	Farm, Metro, Profem, Role, Fair

Note. Independent Variables in all six analyses were year, sex, religion, and college.

Table 6: Changes From 1970 to 1980 With Respect To Endorsement of Feminist Issues by Mankato State University Students

Dependent Variable	Mean Scale Values 1970(N=296)	1980(N=439)	Difference ('80-'70) Unadj.	Adjusted	Ancova[a] Results F(1,681)	p
Profem	3.62	4.12	.50	.47	178.161	.000
Stereo	3.64	3.91	.27	.21	50.226	.000
Care	3.21	3.46	.25	.22	26.229	.000
Fair	3.73	3.88	.17	.05	1.956	.162
Role	3.93	3.96	.03	.03	2.678	.102
Proabortion	3.65	3.18	-.47	-.84	45.852	.0001
Male	3.70	3.11	-.59	-1.04	7.120	.008[b]
Female	3.50	3.14	-.36	-.56		

Table 7: Sex Differences With Respect to Endorsement Of Feminist Issues at Mankato State University

Dependent Variable	Mean Scale Values Male(N=354)	Female(N=381)	Difference(F - M) Unadj.	Adjusted	Ancova[a] Results F(1,681)	p
Profem	3.68	4.15	.47	.39	237.244	.000
Stereo	3.67	3.92	.25	.15	13.177	.000
Care	3.28	3.43	.15	.10	5.761	.017
Fair	3.73	3.91	.18	.13	18.344	.000
Role	3.94	3.96	.02	.02	.159	.690
Proabortion	3.41	3.33	-.08	-.16	4.071	.044
1970	3.70	3.50	-.20	-.42	7.120	.008[b]
19	3.11	3.14	.03	.04		

[a]See Table 5 for Covariates employed in each of the six analyses.

[b]F-test of year by Sex Interaction for Abortion variable.

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